

ANNEX

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING  
PRIORITY NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE OBJECTIVES

1. Priority National Intelligence Objectives should be directly related to the intelligence required in the formulation and execution of national security policy. They should flow directly from the intelligence mission as set forth by the NSC and are therefore merely more detailed specifications of the intelligence required to fulfill that mission. They should provide the basis for determining appropriate research and collection requirements.

2. Most of the intelligence required in the formulation and execution of national security policy will be the product of normal intelligence collection and research. Priority National Intelligence Objectives should be limited to those critical factors which require special attention and effort.

3. In order to afford a stable basis for intelligence planning, a statement of Priority National Intelligence Objectives should be designed to remain valid over an extended period. It should therefore exclude topics of urgent, but transitory, interest, which will require and receive ad hoc treatment in any case.

4. Broad generalities are of little practical use as priority guidance to collection and research. Priority National Intelligence Objectives should therefore be specific enough to provide guidance for planning the allocation of collection and research resources, but not so specific as to constitute in themselves research and collection requirements.

5. In determining Priority National Intelligence Objectives, due consideration should be given to beneficial as well as harmful potentialities.

6. All items in a statement of Priority National Intelligence Objectives should be worthy of special attention and effort, but obviously some will be of greater urgency or importance than others. The present statement is divided into four broad categories of priority distinguished, in the text, in terms of both their criticality and the appropriate level of intelligence effort above that which is normal for general coverage. The following criteria will serve as guidance for determining the relative importance of Priority National Intelligence Objectives:

- I. First Category: those which will permit the US (a) to anticipate and counter those policies or actions of foreign states which would occasion gravest consequences to the US; or (b) to stimulate policies or actions of foreign states (or actions within them) which could occasion greatest benefit to the US.

- II. Second Category: those which will permit the US (a) to anticipate and counter those policies or actions of foreign states which would have very grave consequences for the US; or (b) to stimulate policies or actions of foreign states (or actions within them) which could occasion very great benefit to the US.
- III. Third Category: those which will permit the US (a) to anticipate and counter those policies or actions of foreign states which would have serious consequences for the US; or (b) to stimulate policies or actions of foreign states (or actions within them) which could occasion great benefit to the US.
- IV. Fourth Category: those which will permit the US (a) to anticipate and counter those policies or actions of foreign states which would have harmful consequences for the US; or (b) to stimulate policies or actions of foreign states (or actions within them) which could occasion substantial benefits to the US.